



Virginia Service

Meeting the Moment

*A Roadmap for Strengthening Virginia's Communities
through Service, Volunteerism & Civic Engagement*

VIRGINIA STATE SERVICE PLAN



“
 ...our ability
 to truly meet
 this moment
 in time
 hinges on
 leveraging
 our central
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 volunteer
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 ”



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Welcome

When we began developing this plan in the spring of 2021, we did so with the intention of meeting this moment in time.

After all, never in our lifetimes have we faced a foe as formidable as COVID-19. Never have the needs of our communities been greater. And never have social, economic, and health disparities been brought into such stark relief.

But for as much as the events of the past two years have sought to isolate and divide, they have also demonstrated the power of service, grassroots community volunteerism, and civic engagement to unite — whether we’re volunteering our time to support causes dear to our hearts or simply bringing a bag of groceries to a neighbor in need.

As the lead agency for national service and community volunteerism in the Commonwealth, we at the Virginia Service Commission have the privilege of being “plugged in” to these inspiring acts. And while we’ve never taken this privilege for granted, our ability to truly meet this moment in time hinges on leveraging our central position in Virginia’s service and volunteer ecosystem in bolder ways to:

- Instill a commitment to service, volunteerism, and civic engagement in every resident and every community in the Commonwealth;
- Connect and convene organizations across all public, private, and nonprofit sectors to build our collective capacity to “get things done” together; and
- Ensure that every organization committed to strengthening their communities through service and volunteerism has the knowledge and resources they need.

These are the precise aims of our state service plan, and they’ve been developed and honed through one of the most comprehensive, stakeholder-driven planning processes we’ve embarked upon in our history.

To all who lent their insights into the development of this plan, we offer our most humble and sincere thanks, as well as our hope that you see your insights reflected in the following pages.

And to those we may be meeting for the first time, we not only welcome you, we invite you to join us — to add your passion and expertise to help bring the following vision to life.

With gratitude,

Kathy J. Spangler
 Director, Virginia Service Commission

Who We Are



The Virginia Service Commission (VSC) operates within the Virginia Department of Social Services, an executive branch agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and leads national service and community volunteerism for the entire state by setting priorities for service and volunteerism, serving as catalysts and ambassadors for service, creating a sustainable infrastructure for service and volunteerism, and developing resources for the Commonwealth.

In addition to overseeing the annual grant competition that awards funding to AmeriCorps State and other community service programs, VSC actively works to determine community needs, set policy and program priorities, provide training and assistance, support national days of service, promote service and volunteering, and actively recognize individuals and organizations from all sectors for their contributions within their communities.

VSC is supported by the Virginia Service Foundation, an independent 501(c)(3) organization, works intimately with the Volunteer Center Network of Virginia, and is guided by the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism, which adopted this state service plan on November 18, 2021.



THE GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY BOARD ON SERVICE AND VOLUNTEERISM

The Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism was established by Governor Robert F. McDonnell in July 2010 through Executive Order 20. The board advises the Governor and Cabinet Secretaries on national and community service issues and fulfills the responsibilities prescribed by the provisions of the National and Community Trust Act of 1993.

Currently, the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism is composed of 15 to 25 members appointed by the Governor who meet four times per year to help direct the work of the Virginia Service Commission through three standing committees: Program Committee, Special Events and Communications Committee, and Advocacy and Public Policy Committee.

Board members represent various professional, political, ethnic, and business backgrounds and hail from all geographical areas of the state. Board members serve up to two, three-year terms, and applications for appointments are accepted on a rolling basis through the Governor's Office of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Chair

Julie M. Strandlie

Vice-Chair

Vanessa Diamond

Board Members

Naila Alam

Lily Beres

Jessica M. Bowser

Elizabeth Childress Burneson

Lorna Campbell Clarke

Cynthia M. Downs-Taylor

Mark Fero

Zachary Leonsis

Peppy Linden

Priscilla Martinez

Adria Merritt

NaQuetta N. Mitchell

Enid Mpumwire-Machayo

Bryan Pearce-Gonzales

Jamie Seagraves

Sheila Williamson-Branch

Clifford Yee

Lora Grady (Ex-Officio)



Our Two Mandates

As a recognized state service commission responsible for managing AmeriCorps State programs, VSC commits to developing a strategic plan every three years as required by AmeriCorps.

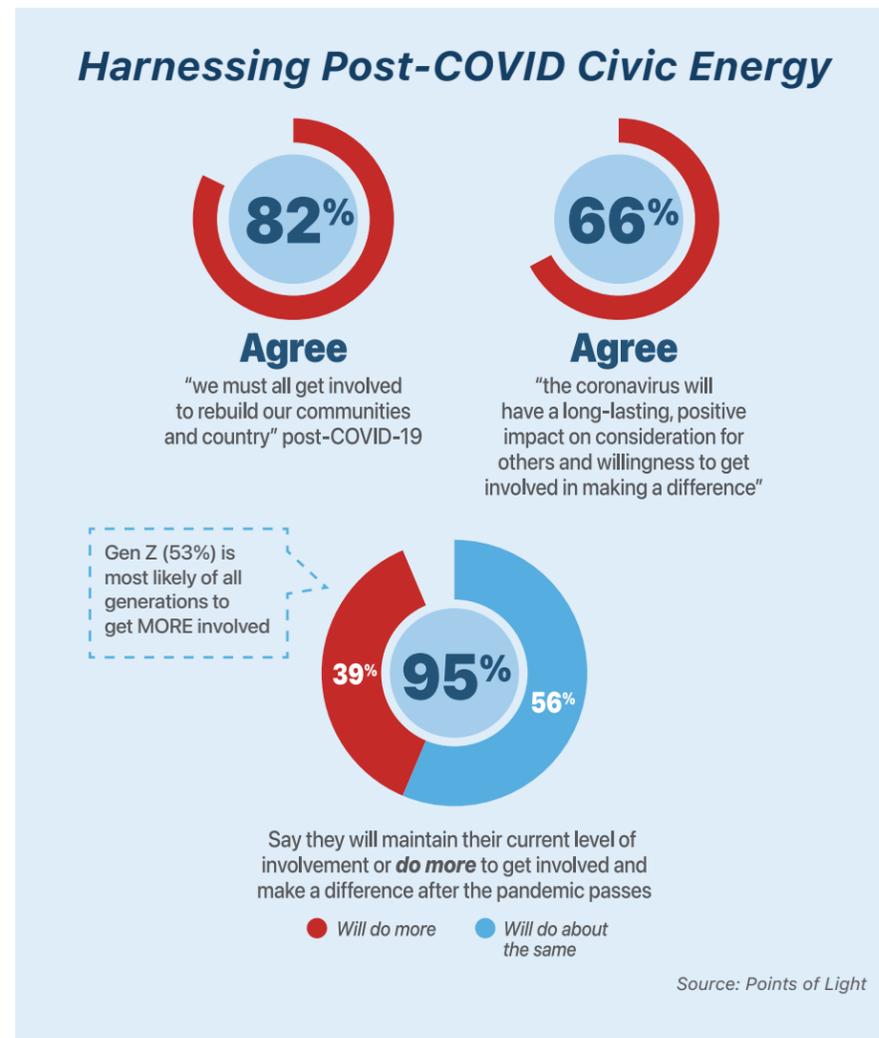
In addition to meeting this requirement, in 2021 the Virginia General Assembly passed House Joint Resolution No. 543 requesting that the Department of Social Services (and thereby VSC) study ways to increase participation in national service.

WHY WE DEVELOPED THIS PLAN

With unprecedented times comes unprecedented energy and commitment. In fact, in its examination of post-COVID civic engagement in America, Points of Light found that 82 percent of individuals feel “we all must get involved to rebuild our communities and country” post-COVID-19. Furthermore, 95 percent say they plan to be at least as involved as they currently are in their communities or will do more to support community causes.

As proof of this increased drive to get involved, Points of Light further reports that 85 percent of nonprofits have seen at least double digit increases in volunteer requests post-COVID-19, even as a 75 percent dip in donations has placed unprecedented financial strains on nonprofits and community organizations. Here in Virginia, these trends hold. The Department of Health, for example, has deployed record levels of volunteers to respond to the pandemic, and the selflessness of Virginians has been instrumental in helping Afghan resettlement in the state.

These are but two examples of the palpable energy for service that we’re witnessing throughout the Commonwealth, and it is incumbent upon VSC to help Virginians find fulfilling opportunities to give of their time and talents — whether that be through AmeriCorps, their local volunteer center, their school, their faith community, or their employer. Similarly, it’s equally incumbent upon us to provide our partners across sectors with the tools and resources they need to tap and harness this tremendous energy and commitment.



HOW WE DEVELOPED THIS PLAN

From the beginning, we wanted this plan to reflect the voices of as many partners and stakeholders as possible. Therefore, to help us gain the insights we knew we’d need and to shepherd the planning process, we enlisted the services of SIR — a strategic consultancy based in Richmond, Virginia with nearly six decades of research and strategic planning expertise.

Together, we embarked on a six-month, six-phase planning process centered around hearing from our stakeholders through primary research and empowering representatives from across our partner sectors to shape and refine our strategic priorities and actions together.

OUR PROCESS

Research

1. Comparative assessment of 15 state service commission plans to determine best practices and opportunities
2. Primary interviews with 10 stakeholders representing nonprofit, faith, government, and private sectors to assess the landscape
3. Stakeholder Survey
 - Distributed via VSC’s stakeholder list and through partner networks
 - Generated 395 completed responses
 - Touched individuals representing nonprofits, local, state, and federal governments, private companies, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, faith communities, healthcare providers, and philanthropic foundations
 - Findings cross-tabulated to reflect differences in sentiment among stakeholder groups and demographic segments

Planning Workshops

1. Steering Committee (*Four workshops total*)
 - Composed of VSC team members and representatives from across VSC’s network
 - Informed the development of the stakeholder survey, brainstormed potential strategies based on survey findings, and provided feedback and refinements to the plan framework and strategic aims
2. Interagency Governmental Working Group (*Four workshops total*)
 - Composed of representatives from the Virginia departments of Social Services, Education, Veteran’s Affairs, Criminal Justice Services, Emergency Management, Health, Human Resources, Workforce Development, and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 - Informed the development of the stakeholder survey, brainstormed potential strategies to address the specific components of House Joint Resolution No. 543, and provided feedback and refinements to the plan framework and strategic aims
3. Governor’s Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism (*Three workshops total*)
 - Brainstormed opportunities to enhance board member roles, brainstormed potential strategies based on survey findings, and provided feedback and refinements to the plan framework and strategic aims



WHAT WE LEARNED

THE COMPETITIVE NATIONAL SERVICE LANDSCAPE

AmeriCorps members represent our nation's best and brightest, and states throughout the country are devoting significant effort to attract national service members through a variety of policy measures and incentives — many of which are reflected in the specific strategies House Joint Resolution No. 543 has charged us with examining. The following efforts demonstrate the growing recognition on the part of state governments and state service commissions that those who serve add value far beyond the “boots on the ground” service they perform as AmeriCorps members. Indeed, the tangible skills and selfless values members bring to the table as students, young professionals, and seniors will only continue to be a highly coveted asset on the part of educators and employers across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors.

In-state College Tuition and Preferential College Admission Policies

Arizona, Maryland, New Hampshire, and Nebraska have all signed this attractive incentive into law to retain service members working in their states and to make national service a more attractive option to graduating high school seniors.

We heard... 81% of VSC's stakeholders feel in-state tuition will generate greater engagement with national service opportunities.

State Income Tax Exemption for AmeriCorps Education Awards

In keeping with the already attractive incentive of the education award to help offset tuition costs for AmeriCorps alumni, states like Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, and Wisconsin have enacted legislation not to tax education awards as income.

We heard... 77% of VSC's stakeholders feel tax exemption will generate greater engagement with national service opportunities.

Hiring Preferences and Retirement Credits

Virginia made history as the country's first state government to become an “Employer of National Service,” and it has been joined by several other states in that distinction, including Montana and New Hampshire. However, in the Commonwealth, this distinction has yet to be actively advanced through codified hiring measures. Meanwhile, states such as California have added incentives on the hiring front by allowing AmeriCorps alumni to purchase state retirement service credits for up to three years of service.

We heard... 70% of VSC's stakeholders feel hiring preferences will generate greater engagement with national service opportunities.

Cabinet-level Appointments and State Appropriations

Since 2008, California has leveraged the cabinet-level Chief Service Officer to advise the Governor and cabinet members on ways to integrate service opportunities into statewide priorities and generate greater investment in the state's service and volunteer infrastructure.

We heard... 78% of VSC's stakeholders feel securing more state appropriations to support AmeriCorps funding match requirements will help organizations develop programming needed on the ground in Virginia's communities.

Greater Incentives

Supporting increases to the AmeriCorps living allowance remains a front-burner issue for many commissions, VSC included. And when it comes to engaging more Virginians in national service opportunities, 84 percent of VSC's stakeholders feel that the most effective strategy will be providing greater incentives (not just a higher living allowance but benefits like housing support and student debt reduction).

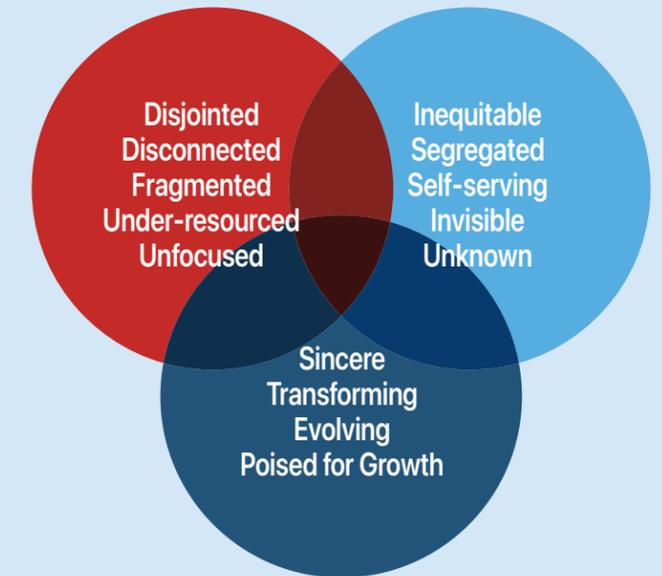
THE STATE OF OUR ECOSYSTEM

Where we are:

We began this process by asking members of our Steering Committee and other stakeholders we interviewed to describe the current state of service and volunteerism in Virginia in just a few words or phrases. And what we heard signaled that VSC operates at the heart of a vast network of players — all with similar goals and passions — who are too often isolated in their work and left unaware of how they can partner with others and access resources to help them amplify their impact.

Furthermore, our stakeholders were keenly aware that service and volunteerism doesn't touch as many lives as it can — both in terms of who engages service and volunteer opportunities, as well as the communities that benefit from the work of service members and volunteers.

How Stakeholders Describe the Ecosystem Now

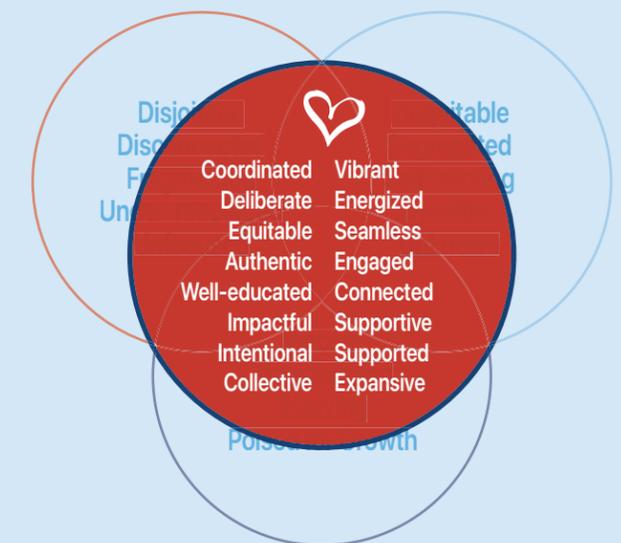


Source: Phase II Qualitative Stakeholder Interviews

Where we want to be:

Despite these gaps and disconnections, however, the sincerity and drive of those who embrace service and volunteerism, and of the organizations who work to strengthen their communities every day, means that we have access to the expertise and energy needed to foster a more cohesive, equitable, and connected ecosystem. And to do so, we must aim to engage, convene, and coalesce the members of this ecosystem with greater intentionality and support them with more robust resources.

How Stakeholders Hope to Describe the Ecosystem by 2025



Source: Phase II Qualitative Stakeholder Interviews





“
As an organization, VSC also faces a significant barrier in terms of what our stakeholders know about us and what we can offer.
”

THE BARRIERS WE FACE

Limited Awareness and Understanding

Right now, many of our stakeholders simply don't feel they're operating from a strong foundation of knowledge and want to know more about:

- What community needs are on the local level;
- Where gaps and disparities currently exist;
- How to find, train, and retain skilled volunteers;
- How Virginians can find fulfilling opportunities to serve and volunteer;
- How to find and successfully apply for funding (through AmeriCorps and other sources);
- How to properly administer grant funds and maximize the effectiveness of grant funding; and
- How to identify ways to improve their programming and extend its reach.

As an organization, VSC also faces a significant barrier in terms of what our stakeholders know about us and what we can offer. In fact, 67 percent of stakeholders say that limited awareness of how VSC can help organizations develop programming and partnerships is a significant hindrance to their ability to leverage service and volunteerism.

Limited Equity

Of the 10 barriers we asked stakeholders to rank, lack of earned trust and equity within marginalized communities received the highest number of "5" ratings — meaning more people ranked this as an "extremely important" barrier to address than any other if we wish to amplify our ability to address community needs through service and volunteerism.

Similarly, stakeholders recognize that the limited resources and capacities of organizations working within rural areas and within traditionally underrepresented communities means that Virginia is too often split between the "haves" and "have-nots" when it comes to competing for funding and volunteers — as well as which communities are currently realizing the benefits that service members and grassroots volunteers provide.

THE NEEDS OF OUR COMMUNITIES

Addressing the Social Determinants of Health

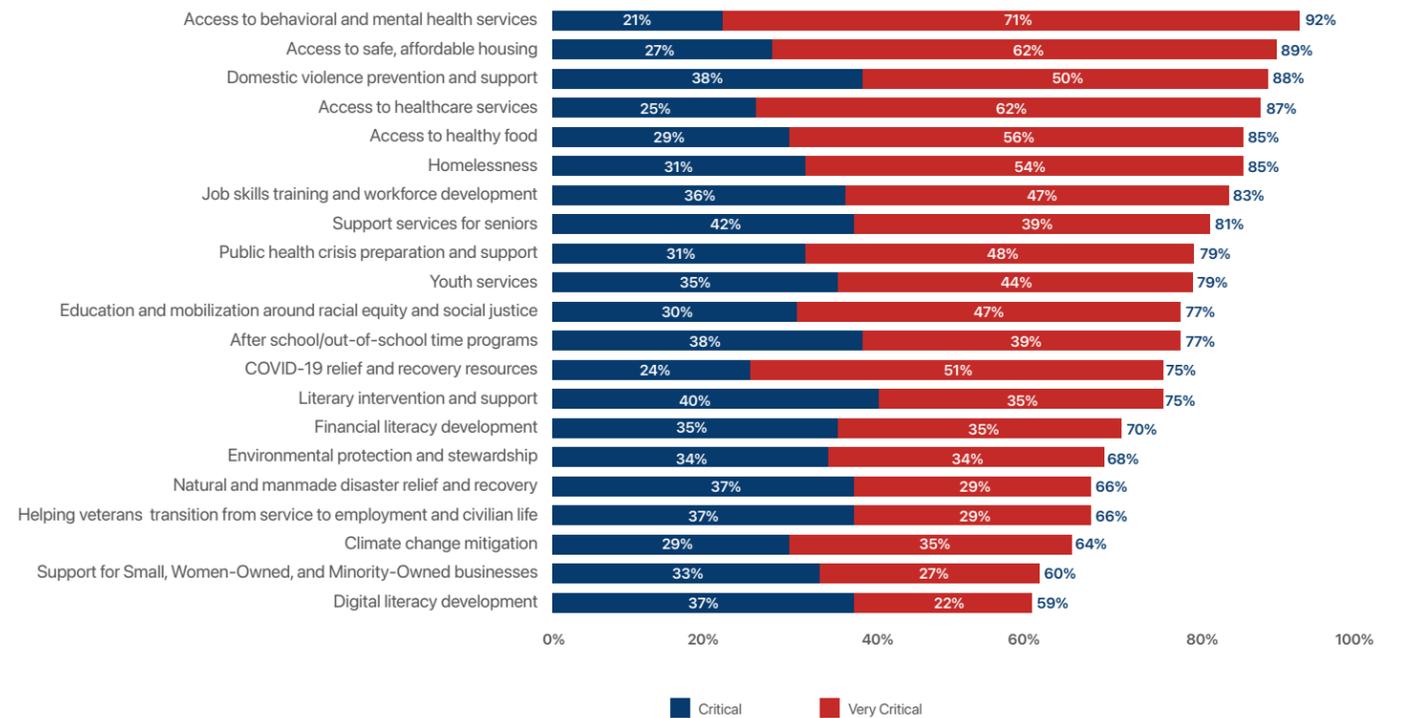
Stakeholders are keenly aware that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the ability of Virginians to live their healthiest and most fulfilling lives, and they recognize that boosting access to behavioral and mental health services will be the most critical need to address in the years ahead.

In this vein, the physical, mental, and emotional toll of the pandemic has also heightened the need to address housing, food security, workforce development, public health initiatives, domestic violence, and support services for Virginia's youth and senior populations who are at risk.

As VSC embraces the mantle of convener and catalyst, it will be incumbent upon us to leverage our knowledge and position at the heart of Virginia's service and volunteer ecosystem to support the growth of programming in these areas by identifying and facilitating cross-sector partnerships, promoting funding opportunities for social determinants of health-centered initiatives, and advancing knowledge of these needs throughout the state.



What are the most critical needs facing Virginia's communities?



Note: While segmentation analysis of community needs by demographic profile and by organizational sector revealed shifts in needs rankings that VSC will use as part of its targeted outreach, communications, and resource support and development, the top 15 stakeholder-identified needs remain consistent across the board.

“ Stakeholders are keenly aware that the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the ability of Virginians to live their healthiest and most fulfilling lives... ”



THE OPPORTUNITIES BEFORE US

Building Partnerships

Advancing levels of service, volunteerism, and civic engagement hinges on addressing the top-identified barrier — limited awareness and understanding.

In that regard, stakeholders see value and feasibility in leveraging communications, marketing, and promotional materials to generate awareness and understanding — especially among Virginia's 55+ population and within secondary and post-secondary educational institutions.

However, stakeholders place much higher importance on grassroots partnership building across sectors and using “high touch” outreach to better communicate the value and impact of service and the resources and opportunities available to them.

We heard... 82% say the most valuable support VSC can provide is to cultivate stronger “on-the-ground” partnerships across sectors.

Tracking Needs and Disparities

When it comes to developing community-level programming and expanding the reach of current programming, stakeholders want to be sure they're truly addressing the needs of Virginians and that they're delivering programming to areas of the Commonwealth that need it most.

Similarly, more than two-thirds of stakeholders say that an ecosystem-wide assessment of diversity, equity, and inclusion is needed and that stronger incentives and higher living allowances will be critical to diversifying AmeriCorps membership in the Commonwealth.

We heard... 84% say that identifying and tracking community-level needs, as well as underserved geographical areas and populations, will be essential to strengthening programming.

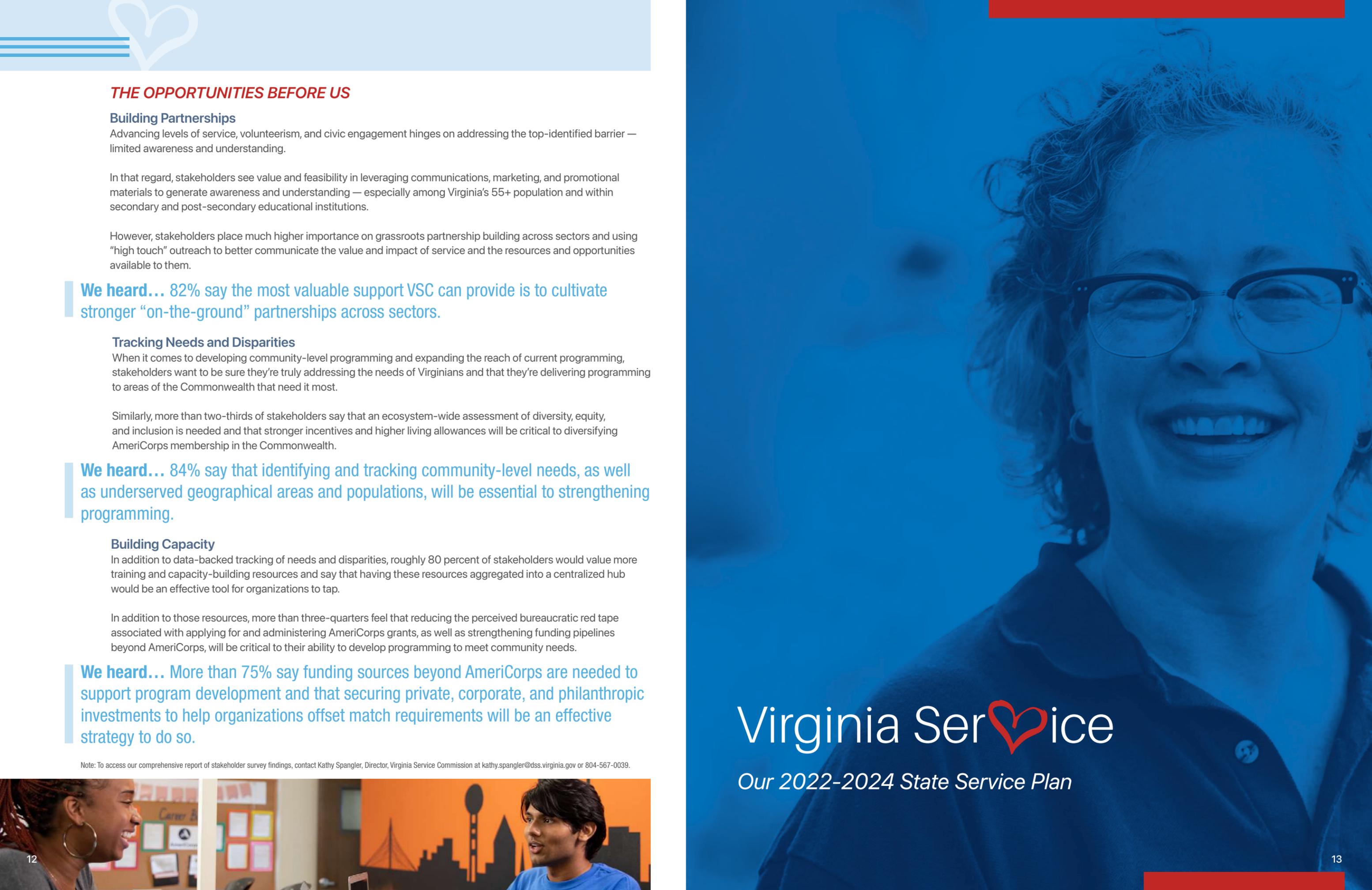
Building Capacity

In addition to data-backed tracking of needs and disparities, roughly 80 percent of stakeholders would value more training and capacity-building resources and say that having these resources aggregated into a centralized hub would be an effective tool for organizations to tap.

In addition to those resources, more than three-quarters feel that reducing the perceived bureaucratic red tape associated with applying for and administering AmeriCorps grants, as well as strengthening funding pipelines beyond AmeriCorps, will be critical to their ability to develop programming to meet community needs.

We heard... More than 75% say funding sources beyond AmeriCorps are needed to support program development and that securing private, corporate, and philanthropic investments to help organizations offset match requirements will be an effective strategy to do so.

Note: To access our comprehensive report of stakeholder survey findings, contact Kathy Spangler, Director, Virginia Service Commission at kathy.spangler@dss.virginia.gov or 804-567-0039.



Virginia Service

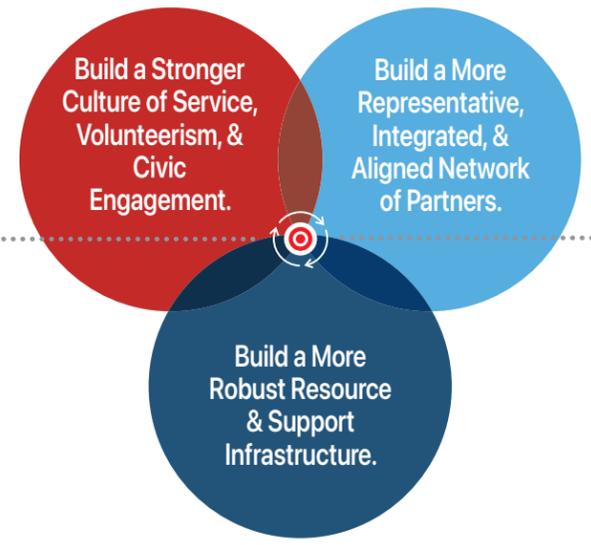
Our 2022-2024 State Service Plan

PURPOSE
We believe in the power of service and volunteerism to spark change, strengthen lives, and produce lasting impacts for communities throughout Virginia.

This purpose drives the **GOAL** of the Virginia State Service Plan.

GOAL
Inspire more Virginians from all parts of the Commonwealth to engage in service and volunteer experiences to combat disparities and meet our most pressing needs.

This goal will guide our work to advance **THREE INTERRELATED STRATEGIES.**



- Build a Stronger Culture of Service, Volunteerism, & Civic Engagement.**
1. Policy Change
 2. Civic Health Index Development
 3. Awareness, Recruitment & Recognition

- Build a More Representative, Integrated & Aligned Network of Partners**
1. VSC as Convener & Catalyst
 2. Equity Advancement
 3. Governor's Advisory Board Empowerment

- Build a More Robust Resource & Support Infrastructure**
1. Private & Public Investment
 2. Capacity-building & Program Development
 3. Stakeholder Mobilization & Engagement

WE'LL KNOW WE HAVE SUCCEEDED WHEN:

VSC has advanced knowledge and policies that promote and incentivize greater participation in national service, community volunteerism, and grassroots civic engagement.

VSC has mapped and mobilized Virginia's service and volunteerism ecosystem through active engagement and built coalitions across all sectors – and across the Commonwealth.

VSC has developed a strong and growing pool of resources to fuel the expansion of impactful programming to meet identified community needs in all areas of the Commonwealth.

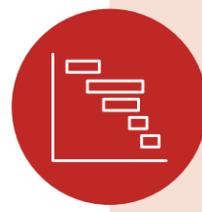
Build a Stronger Culture of Service, Volunteerism & Civic Engagement

By 2025, we will be able to answer "yes" to the following questions:



Policy Change

Is national service a **more viable and attractive option for all Virginians** through greater incentives and tangible benefits?



Civic Health Index Development

Do we have a **comprehensive understanding of the value and impact of national service, organized volunteerism, and grassroots civic engagement** – and are we leveraging that knowledge to make a more compelling case for continued investment in service and volunteer resources?



Awareness, Recruitment & Recognition

Have we **boosted the number of Virginians engaging** in national service, organized volunteerism, and grassroots civic engagement?

Build a Stronger Culture of Service, Volunteerism & Civic Engagement

TARGETED ACTION

1 Policy Change

Cultivate “national service and volunteer champions” across all sectors of the ecosystem, including Virginia’s executive branch agencies and the General Assembly, to support policy measures that will place Virginia in the upper tier of states leveraging national service and grassroots volunteerism, such as:

- a. Increasing the AmeriCorps living allowance to make national service a more equitable and attractive proposition for more Virginians;
- b. Providing Virginia in-state tuition and offering preferential college admission for national service alumni to attract the nation’s best and brightest to the Commonwealth;
- c. Offering Virginia state income tax exemption for the Segal Education Award;
- d. Strengthening Virginia’s status as an “Employer of National Service” through codified hiring preferences within Virginia state government and increased adoption of hiring preferences throughout Virginia’s private sector;
- e. Embedding service and volunteerism into executive level priority areas and advancing the intersectionality of service and volunteerism across all government agencies; and
- f. Allocating state funding to help offset the burden of AmeriCorps funding match requirements for organizations operating in marginalized communities.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – BY 2025:

Legislative Advancement

- Through its statewide outreach and engagement, VSC has advanced policy measures providing for (b) in-state tuition and preferential college admission for national service members, (c) Segal Education Award tax exemption, and (d) hiring preferences for service members in Virginia state agencies.

Introduction of Legislation

- Legislation aligned with State Service Plan policy priorities (right) has been introduced for consideration by Virginia’s General Assembly.

Education and Private Sector Adoption

- Through its statewide outreach and engagement, VSC has advanced the adoption of preferential college admission standards for national service alumni in state-funded institutions.
- Through its statewide outreach and engagement, VSC has advanced the adoption and recognition of the “Employers of National Service” distinction among Virginia’s private sector.

Public and Private Investment

- Through its statewide outreach and engagement, VSC has advanced levels of public appropriations and private investment to support the fulfillment of AmeriCorps funding match requirements.



TARGETED ACTION

2 Civic Health Index Development

Using independent research and partner-generated data, conduct a baseline assessment of the economic value, community benefits, and personal volunteer/civic engagement practices of Virginians to support the development of a public-facing Civic Health Index for Virginia.

3 Awareness, Recruitment & Recognition

Conduct a statewide awareness, recruitment, and recognition campaign to foster a lifelong commitment to civic engagement among all Virginians, increase equitable engagement with opportunities, diversify the Commonwealth’s pipeline of national service members and grassroots volunteers, and enhance the attraction and retention of AmeriCorps alumni working in Virginia.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – BY 2025:

Baseline Assessment Completion

- VSC has developed an extensive and expansive working knowledge of civic life in Virginia, as well as the ability to track and regularly report on the following civic health indicators (as well as others to be determined as part of Civic Health Index development):
 - The number of Virginians engaging in service, organized volunteerism, and grassroots civic engagement
 - The manners in which Virginians engage those opportunities
 - The economic value and civic impact of their contributions

Civic Health Index Launch and Promotion

- VSC’s civic health findings have been packaged and widely promoted among VSC’s partners and the general public as part of statewide outreach and overall communications and messaging.

Campaign Development and Launch

- VSC has retained the services of a marketing and communications firm to develop and launch a revamped cross-channel marketing, recruitment, and communications platform.

Awareness and Familiarity

- Benchmarks have been established through the Civic Health Index baseline assessment and through VSC’s 2021 Stakeholder Survey.
- Goals for increased awareness and familiarity of opportunities, and of VSC as an organization, have been established.

Engagement with Service and Volunteer Opportunities

- Benchmarks have been established through the Civic Health Index baseline assessment and through VSC’s 2021 Stakeholder Survey.
- Goals for increased participation in national service, community volunteerism, and grassroots civic engagement have been established.

Recognition

- VSC has expanded the reach and impact of the Virginia Governor’s Volunteerism and Community Service awards and examined potential new avenues of recognition.

National Service Alumni Retention

- VSC has established a baseline knowledge of the number of AmeriCorps alumni living, working, or studying in Virginia and has developed a plan to increase the retention of AmeriCorps alumni living, working, or studying in the state.

Days of Service Adoption

- VSC has established a baseline knowledge of the number of organizations offering paid time off for their employees to engage in service and volunteer opportunities and has developed a plan to advance adoption of paid time off policies.
- VSC has leveraged outreach to increase participation in days of service events.

Build a More Representative, Integrated & Aligned Network of Partners

By 2025, we will be able to answer “yes” to the following questions:

VSC as Convener & Catalyst

Do we have a **comprehensive understanding of all players** in the service and volunteer ecosystem, and have we established more strategic partnerships across all sectors?



Equity Advancement

Does our network of partners truly reflect the diversity of Virginia, and are we **supporting the development of programs in marginalized communities and underserved areas** of the Commonwealth?



Governor’s Advisory Board Empowerment

Does our board have an **intimate understanding** of national service, organized volunteerism, and grassroots civic engagement — and are they **active in our work**?



Build a More Representative, Integrated, and Aligned Network of Partners

TARGETED ACTION

1 VSC as Convener & Catalyst

Strengthen VSC’s role as a convener of cross-sector partnerships and initiatives through high-touch personal outreach and listening sessions, as well as a stronger signature annual Virginia Volunteerism Summit.

2 Equity Advancement

Advance levels of equity within Virginia’s service and volunteer ecosystem by targeting outreach and program development resources to organizations serving traditionally marginalized populations, organizations operating within geographically underrepresented areas of the Commonwealth, and organizations developing programming to meet community needs locally identified as critical.

3 Governor’s Advisory Board Empowerment

Leverage the passions and expertise of the Governor’s Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism by equipping and empowering appointees to be active champions of service and volunteerism within their communities and networks — and by providing more opportunities for appointees to actively advise VSC on strategic priorities.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – BY 2025:

Network Mapping and Partnership Facilitation

- VSC has mapped its network of active partners and stakeholders and identified targets to increase engagement in each sector (e.g., state agency representatives, local government representatives, faith leadership, private employers/business community, K-12 educators, higher education providers, minority-serving institutions, healthcare service providers, aging services providers).
- VSC has established representative working groups or advisory committees for each of its stakeholder sectors.

Virginia Volunteerism Summit

- VSC has increased and diversified yearly participation in the annual Virginia Volunteerism Summit, increased private sponsorship of the event, and made continual refinements to the event format based on stakeholder feedback.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Baseline Assessment

- VSC has supported the completion of a VISTA-sponsored assessment of diversity, equity, and inclusion within Virginia’s national service and volunteer ecosystem.
- VSC has used this assessment, as well as its own network mapping, to identify gaps and develop targeted strategies for equitable outreach, engagement, and program support.

New Program Development

- VSC has provided planning grant funding or planning conceptualization/development support for at least one program operating within a marginalized community identified in each of the state’s five regions (as demarcated by the Department of Social Services).

Board Orientation and Knowledge

- VSC has refined and strengthened the board member orientation process to enhance appointees’ knowledge of the statewide service and volunteer ecosystem, as well as their leadership and advisory capacities.

Field Engagement

- Appointees are engaged in at least one national service program site visit and meet with at least one prospective community partner or prospective Virginia Service Foundation donor per year.

Build a More Robust Resource & Support Infrastructure

By 2025, we will be able to answer “yes” to the following questions:

Private & Public Investment

Have we generated **greater levels of monetary support** to advance our work, and are we leveraging greater levels of investment across sectors as a result?

Capacity-Building & Program Development

Are we **strengthening and scaling existing initiatives** and community programming — and are we supporting the **development of new programming** — to meet identified community needs?

Stakeholder Mobilization & Engagement

Are we **better positioned to communicate** with our stakeholders, connect them with opportunities and resources, and **foster long-standing relationships**?



Build A More Robust Resource and Support Infrastructure

TARGETED ACTION

1 Private & Public Investment

Leverage the Virginia Service Foundation and VSC’s partners across all sectors to drive greater levels of private and public investment to support program development and capacity-building resource generation.

2 Capacity-Building & Program Development

Identify and curate a comprehensive and up-to-date library of capacity-building resources to help partners track community needs and critical disparities on both the state and local levels, overcome stakeholder-identified barriers, support new program development, and strengthen and scale successful existing programs and resources.

3 Stakeholder Mobilization & Engagement

Assess the current composition and active engagement of VSC’s stakeholder network and develop a streamlined Stakeholder Relationship Management (SRM) platform to drive personal outreach and communications efforts, ensure equitable engagement practices, and help partners connect and share resources with each other.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – BY 2025:

Annual Operating Budget

- VSC and the Virginia Service Foundation has increased their annual operating budgets through both public and private funding sources.

Funding to Support Match Requirement

- VSC and the Virginia Service Foundation has advanced levels of public appropriations and private investment to support the fulfillment of AmeriCorps funding match requirements.

Donor Base

- Through its outreach and engagement, VSC has developed a more robust pool of active and potential donors.

Reporting

- VSC has leveraged its SRM platform (see Targeted Action 3) to better track and report all fundraising efforts.

Existing Resource Assessment

- VSC has audited the resources housed on its website to ensure they meet barriers identified in VSC’s 2021 Stakeholder Survey.
- VSC has supported the VISTA-sponsored volunteer center baseline capacity and resource assessment and developed strategies to extend volunteer center resources into underserved areas of the Commonwealth.

Resource Development

- VSC has assessed gaps in resources currently available and identified internal and external/partner-driven avenues to develop needed resources to help organizations build capacity.

Program Development

- Number of first-time AmeriCorps funding applications has increased by 20%.
- VSC’s targeted outreach and engagement has resulted in an increase in applications from organizations operating in identified marginalized communities.

SRM Platform Adoption

- VSC has developed an extensive and expansive working knowledge of its network (see network mapping) and identified targeted strategies to boost representation and partnerships across all sectors.
- VSC has researched, vetted, and secured an SRM software platform best suited for its outreach and engagement needs.
- Roles and responsibilities for updating and maintaining the SRM platform have been established and assigned.



How to Take this Plan With You



When it comes to strategic planning, the word “actionable” gets tossed around quite a bit. But what does it mean to have an actionable plan?

For VSC, and for this plan specifically, actionability begins and ends with inspiration, and it is our sincere hope that this plan has indeed inspired you to think about the scope, value, and impact of national service, community volunteerism, and grassroots civic engagement in a new light — and to consider your place within your community, within this ecosystem, and within this plan.

For example:

- What about the past two years has shifted your thinking about our responsibilities as citizens of the world and members of our communities — about what it means to engage civically?
- Which community needs are within your power to help address — either through your personal service and engagement or through the mission and work of your organization?
- In what ways can you or your organization help to build Virginia's culture of service and volunteerism — to make Virginia not just for lovers but for those who love to serve others?
- In what ways can you or your organization be proactive about sharing what you're doing, learning what others are doing, and developing partnerships from that place of shared understanding?
- In what ways can you contribute to building the knowledge and capacity of people and organizations working to strengthen their communities?
- Which priorities of this plan most closely align with your vision for Virginia's future, and what resources can you commit to advance those priorities?
- What would you like to learn more about?

Our state service plan is an ambitious one, and we recognize that truly fulfilling its promise and meeting the needs of all communities in Virginia will require us to join forces in ways we never have before — not through one-off meetings but through lasting strategic partnerships.

This plan is only a step. Let's take the next steps together.

To learn more about our research findings, how we support organizations, and how we're putting our state service plan into action, contact Kathy Spangler, Director, Virginia Service Commission at kathy.spangler@dss.virginia.gov or 804-567-0039, or visit virginiasservice.virginia.gov.

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